

way, and the nobles would be massacred in every province. So well have they managed matters in the last ten months ! but I do not desire to be the King of a mob. If there are the means to govern by a constitution, well and good. I wished for the empire of the world, and to insure it complete liberty of action was necessary to me. To govern France merely it is possible that a constitution may be better. I wished for the empire of the world, as who would not have done in my place ? The world invited me to rule over it. Sovereigns and subjects alike emulously bowed the neck under my sceptre. I have seldom met with opposition in France, but still I have encountered more of it from some obscure and unarmed Frenchman than from all these kings so resolute, just now, no longer to have a man of the people for their equal ! See then what appears to you possible ; let me know your ideas. Public discussion, free elections, responsible ministers, the liberty of the press, I have no objection to all that, the liberty of the press especially ; to stifle it is absurd. I am convinced on this point. I am the man of the people : if the people really wish for liberty let them have it. I have acknowledged their sovereignty. It is just that I should lend an ear to their will, nay, even to their caprices. I have never been disposed to oppress them for my pleasure. I conceived great designs ; but fate has been against me ; I am no longer a conqueror, nor can I be one. I know what is possible and what is not. I have no further object than to raise up France and bestow on her a government suitable to her. I have no hatred to liberty, I have set it aside when it obstructed my path, but I understand what it means ; I was brought up in its school : besides, the work of fifteen years is overturned, and it is not possible to recommence it. It would take twenty years, and the lives of 2,000,000 of men to be sacrificed to it. As for the rest, I desire peace, but I can only obtain it by means of victory. I would not inspire you with false expectations. I permit it to be said that negotiations are going on ; there are none. I foresee a hard struggle, a long war. To support it I must be seconded by the nation, but in return I believe they

will expect liberty. They shall have it:
the circumstances are new. All I desire
is to be in-